

Supporting those affected by the Manchester attack

Manchester Attack Support Newsletter

March 2018

This newsletter is a new way of providing advice and information to support anyone affected by the Manchester Arena attack on 22 May 2017.

The attack killed 22 people and injured many more, and work is still going on across the country to provide care, treatment and support for all those affected.

In this newsletter you will find updates about the Kerslake Review and the plans to create a permanent memorial. You'll also find updates from the various partners and organisations that are supporting people through the tragedy.

We would love to hear your thoughts on the newsletter, including your ideas for content.

If you need help, we're here for you

www.manchesterattacksupport.org.uk was launched in December to support people affected by the attack. The website brings together a wealth of information and advice from all the partners and organisations working to support people affected by the tragedy.

If you were affected and need help, we're here for you. A wealth of support is available. All you have to do is ask.

If you know someone who would benefit from help or support, or who would like to be kept updated on plans and developments related to 22 May, please tell them about the website and encourage them to sign up to receive the newsletter.

Plans for the anniversary

You may have seen that there are plans to commemorate the first anniversary of the Manchester Arena attack. Manchester City Council has been leading on the development of the proposals and has created a programme of events.

The first anniversary of the attack will be an intensely emotional time for many people. In putting together this programme, we've worked closely with bereaved families to make sure our plans reflect their wishes as much as possible.

In this spirit, outline plans are based around two themes: Remembrance; and Reflection and Celebration of Life – recognising each of the 22 people who lost their lives in the attack, those who were injured, first responders, and Manchester Together, embracing the solidarity shown by the city.

You can find out more on the website <https://manchesterattacksupport.org.uk/22-may-commemoration/>

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The Kerslake Review

The Kerslake Review is looking at how the city responded to the attack on 22 May and how people who were at the Arena were helped and supported on the night and in the days following the attack.

To ensure that as many lessons are learnt about the response as possible, more than 170 people have participated in the review. Bereaved families, the seriously injured and many who were there on the night have shared their experiences.

The panel has also spoken to members of all the emergency services and other agencies involved in the incident and its aftermath.

The team working on the Review have provided an update on their progress so far, which you can [find online](#). The final report will be published in March 2018 and will cover the findings of the panel and its recommendations.

Plans for a permanent memorial

The Manchester Memorials Advisory Group is a group of civic and business leaders that was established to advise Manchester City Council on the development of a lasting, permanent memorial to honour those directly affected by the attack. It is also intended that the memorial will be a focal point for reflection.

The group is chaired by Malcolm Press, the vice-chancellor of Manchester Metropolitan University. The members of the group are overseeing a consultation process to help shape those plans.

The views of families and survivors are at the heart of this process, and so they are being consulted first for their views. Their feedback will help shape a wider consultation process around the meaning, purpose, feel and potential location of the memorial.

This will eventually inform a creative brief, so that the right people can help come up with ideas to achieve this vision. Getting this right will take time – it's important not to rush it.

If you would like to participate in the consultation process and contribute your views, you can: just [register your details here](#) and we will keep you informed.

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What happened to the tributes left in St Ann's Square?

You may have visited St Ann's Square after the attack. It became a focal point for the city and its people to express their grief and solidarity with bereaved families and those affected by the attack. In mid-June, Manchester City Council and its partners arranged to carefully and respectfully remove, preserve and document as many of the tributes as possible, as well as those left at Manchester Arena and Victoria Station.

The tributes are now being carefully curated into an archive, which will document the tributes for years to come. It will eventually be open to the public and those affected so they can view and reflect.

The archive will contain all tribute material, with the exception of the composted or replanted floral tributes, distributed soft toys, generic candles and balloons. All tributes have been retained and will be treated equally, from scribbled notes on scraps of paper, to paintings and poems. Everything has an important role in constructing personal and collective memories of the event, as well as reflecting and interpreting the public response.

There are a number of tributes that won't be there. For example, almost 300,000 bouquets of flowers were left at St Ann's Square. Most of those tributes were taken to Wythenshawe Park, where the wrapping was removed by In Bloom volunteers. The messages attached were saved and taken to the archive at Manchester Art Gallery.

You may have also seen a story in the media before Christmas about the soft toys that were given new homes. In total, more than 1,900 soft toys were donated. Initially, they were dried out by Timpsons and then washed by members of the Women's Institute (WI) from branches across Greater Manchester. The University of Manchester filmed and interviewed WI volunteers and took individual photographs of the teddy bears.

We will update you on the progress of the archive via the website.

www.manchesterattacksupport.org.uk

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Getting help and support

Many people continue to be affected following the attack and may need extra support, and some people who didn't want help initially, now find themselves struggling or in need of support.

A number of organisations are providing help for anyone affected by the attack. Details are available by visiting: <https://manchesterattacksupport.org.uk/get-support/>

You can find advice on coping after a traumatic event and information about the help available through the [Manchester Resilience Hub](#). You can also email them at gm.help@nhs.net or phone them on **03330 095 071**.

For emotional support any time of the day or night you can contact Samaritans. Their number is free and they provide listening support on the phone or by email. You can contact them by phone on **116 123** or email jo@samaritans.org

Young people aged 13–25, and their families, can get specialist help and advice from [42nd Street](#). Get in touch if you need advice or support.

If you, or someone you love, are struggling, ask for help.

A survivor's view

Samantha, a survivor from the Bataclan attack in Paris in 2015, found it helpful to write a letter describing what it feels like to be a survivor and her hopes for the future.

You can hear more from her in [a short video produced by the BBC](#) where she talks movingly about her thoughts and feelings, the impact of the attack, and the knowledge that it will take some time before she can enjoy the things she used to.

The [specialist support available](#) for people like Samantha can help many other people in a similar situation cope with the effects of being a survivor.

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Contributing to the next newsletter

Like Samantha, some people find it helpful to write about their experiences and feelings. If you are interested in having something you have written or created featured in the newsletter, or have some information you think others may benefit from, please get in touch and we'll work with you on developing some content.

We are also encouraging people to sign up for the newsletter by registering their contact details with us. You can do this at www.manchesterattacksupport.org.uk

Please pass on details of the website and newsletter to anyone who you feel might benefit from knowing about them.

Young people's meeting

Manchester Resilience Hub Family Days

A number of families affected by the arena attack thought it would be beneficial for children and young people to meet each other and share their thoughts and feelings about how the attack had affected their lives.

Greater Manchester Police worked with the Manchester Resilience Hub to make arrangements and organised a day for people to get together on 27 January. Separate sessions were held for children and young people, and parents and carers, with activities such as making messages of hope.

The feedback from the day was excellent: 98% of children and young people who attended said they would recommend the event to others involved in the attack. Manchester Resilience Hub, working with a number of partners, are hoping to organise more events over the coming months.

If your family was affected by the arena attack and you'd be interested in attending future family days, you can contact the Hub on 0333 009 5071 or email GM.help@nhs.net If you're not already registered with the Hub, you can register online at www.penninecare.nhs.uk/wellbeingscreen

Media requests

In the run-up to the 22 May anniversary, the media may want to get in touch with you to hear what happened to you on the night. For some people, this can be a very therapeutic experience and can allow you to tell your story. However, it is not for everyone, as some people may find it distressing. If you are interested in receiving media requests, please let us know by emailing anne.eyre@traumatraining.com and we will get in touch.